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ANNUAL REPORT

To May, 1873.

TO THE MEMBERS OF

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART.

The Trustees of the Association for the year ending May, 1873, respectfully submit the following report :

They have received in cash, from the organization of the Museum to the present time, for subscriptions to the Fund..	\$198,100 00
And in special Donations, works of art valued at.....	20,000 00
From Sales of Catalogues.....	754 60
From an Assessment on the members under the By Laws....	7,160 00
From Interest on temporary investments.....	1,235 83
	<hr/>
	\$227,250 43

Which is accounted for as follows :

By Purchases of works of art.....	\$145,405 75	
“ Donations “ “	20,000 00	
“ Reproductions of art objects.....	1,703 50	
“ Etchings, less amount received from sales...	4,156 49	
“ Furniture.....	1,137 23	
“ Show-cases.....	1,728 42	
	<hr/>	
Property on hand.....	\$174,131 39	
By payments for Repairs, Rent, Salaries, Insurance, Freight, and other current expenses, less \$2,132 received for Insurance Scrip.....	36,444 50	
Balance in hand of Treasurer.....	16,674 54	\$227,250 43
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It is proper to state that in addition to the funds already received there is a considerable amount subscribed, but not yet collected ; and, also, recent subscriptions for special purposes connected with the Museum, not yet completed. The aggre-

gate of all these with the donations of works of art, will considerably exceed the sum of \$250,000, which was the minimum fixed by the Trustees, at the outset of the enterprise.

The Museum is now completely established as the leading institution of the kind in the country ; and its permanence and future success are entirely assured. There is at the same time no cause for abundant congratulation in the amounts so far raised for it, as shown by the general statement submitted above.

It is difficult to understand the reason of this shortcoming. There is no community in the world which boasts so much of its public schools, which sends so many travelers abroad, and which spends so much money for dwelling houses, equipages, furniture, social entertainments, and for personal adornment, as that of New York. There is no community more generous in its support of churches, hospitals, and colleges, or, even in its expenditures for works of art, provided they are bought for private use, as the picture-sales of the past winter and present season will attest. And yet, in its contributions for public art-objects, New York is less liberal than other smaller places in this country, notably Boston and Philadelphia. While it takes rank among four or five of the largest capitals in the civilized world, it is far less rich in objects of art than many places in Europe which have not one-tenth of its wealth or population. Including its suburbs, it is four times larger than Amsterdam, and yet while there are art-treasures in the Dutch city interesting and important enough to detain the traveler for weeks, he may inspect every thing of much value in our New Amsterdam in as many days. The great masterpieces of Rembrandt and Van der Helst alone are worth crossing the Atlantic to see, while here in the daughter-city, so to speak, which so vastly excels its mother-town in trade and wealth and population, and in the universal diffusion of intelligence, it is difficult to raise for a foundation-fund such a sum of money as Governments in Europe frequently appropriate for the art-expenditures of a single year.

While the amount subscribed for the Metropolitan Museum was given without any restriction as to the particular mode of its employment, the Trustees have considered that it should be

appropriated to the purchase of works of art, and that the current expenses of the Establishment should be provided from other sources. They entertain the hope that the public authorities may, before long, be so well convinced of its importance and utility, that they will furnish the funds for its ordinary expenses.* But until this shall have been done, it will be necessary to resort to private aid. To this end it was provided in the Constitution that an assessment might be laid upon each member of the Corporation for an amount not exceeding fifty dollars in any one year, to be determined from time to time by the Trustees. They, accordingly, last year decided to call upon the Members for the full amount. About one hundred and seventy-nine responded to this call.

Among the civil service estimates by the British Government for 1873, for which appropriations have been already or probably will be made, appear the following, which bear upon the question before us, and show the intelligence and liberality of Parliament in respect of such matters. The amounts are calculated at the rate of five dollars to the pound sterling, which, of course, is below their currency values.

\$5,000 for Mr. Herbert's picture for the Peers' Robing-room.

145,960 for a new wing to Burlington House.

27,735 for the British Museum building.

70,000 for new buildings at South Kensington.

23,255 for Relievi for panels of the Wellington Monument.

522,800 for Science and Art Schools.

121,435 for purchase of objects for circulation through the country in connection with these schools.

191,980 for the South Kensington Museum.

27,850 for the Bethnal Green Branch of the same.

36,160 for the Edinburgh Museum.

124,200 for acquisitions by the British Museum.

15,000 for Greek and Roman Antiquities.

22,500 for excavations at Ephesus.

5,000 for Coins and Medals.

10,000 for Prints and Drawings.

* This has since been done to the extent of \$15,000.

20,225 for salaries, wages, and police in the National Gallery.

4,330 for salaries for the National Portrait Gallery.

3,750 for purchases for the National Portrait Gallery.

All these appropriations, amounting to more than one million and a quarter of dollars, are granted in a single year by the British Parliament, and the greater part of them are for objects connected with the encouragement and support of the Fine Arts in London alone.

What a contrast it is to this, that our Trustees have so far received nothing from the public authorities even to pay their rent, taxes, and other current expenses. Such an appropriation would be the more reasonable from the fact that the Legislature of a previous year had authorized the Department of Parks to raise the sum of five hundred thousand dollars for the purpose of a building for our collections, which cannot be finished for several years. Meanwhile, the Museum needs a habitation just as much now as it will ten years from now, and it would be only carrying out the spirit of the appropriation to pay the Museum the interest upon this fund ; at any rate, until the city shall be obliged to pay it to the future bondholders.

In view of these facts, the Trustees earnestly request all those persons, who believe that the establishment of Museums of Arts is important for the purpose of educating and refining the people, who desire that their children should have an instructed taste in other matters besides dress and fashion, and who are patriotic enough to wish that this city should take a decent place among the capitals of the world, in its encouragement of this department of human effort, to contribute liberally out of their own private means to the Metropolitan Museum, and also to exert whatever influence they may have in procuring favorable action in its behalf on the part of the City and State authorities.

Meanwhile, the Trustees are endeavoring to manage its affairs in the most economical manner possible consistent with the purposes for which it was established. And they desire in this connection to refer to the valuable services of several of their colleagues, who, at a considerable sacrifice of their own

interests, have volunteered to perform important duties for which it would otherwise have been necessary to employ a superintendent at a large salary.

The Trustees willingly turn from these financial matters to other and more agreeable views of their affairs.

It was stated in the last Annual Report that while the building in Fifth Avenue was sufficiently large and convenient to display the pictures which had been purchased by the Museum, it was entirely inadequate for the purpose of a Loan-Exhibition, and that it would be impracticable, therefore, to attempt anything of that kind at that time.

Circumstances, however, have arisen since the date of that report, which have made it important to undertake such an exhibition immediately, and for that purpose to acquire a new habitation at once for the Museum. The proprietor of the Cesnola Collection of antiquities from Cyprus offered to deposit it with us, provided we would have it properly installed and shown to the public. This collection will be hereinafter more particularly described. We will only observe now that it is so extremely interesting and valuable and its possession so vitally important to the reputation and prestige of our institution, that the Trustees did not hesitate to accept the offer, and to incur any reasonable expense that might arise from its exhibition. An additional motive for doing this was the hope that by displaying it properly, it might early become the property of the Museum—a point of immense importance and which, from the subscriptions already promised to that end, the Trustees have the best reasons to believe that they shall attain. They found still another stimulus to their action in the opportunity which presented itself of securing the Douglas Mansion, in Fourteenth Street, near the Sixth Avenue. This is a large building, measuring seventy-five feet front, by eighty-five feet deep, and capable, with a few alterations, of displaying to advantage not only their present collection, but also the antiquities from Cyprus and such other objects as they may desire to obtain for a loan-exhibition. It is near enough to important thoroughfares to be easily accessible, and is surrounded by spacious grounds, with a frontage of 225 feet on Fourteenth Street, upon which grounds new galleries may be built, should they be required, before the

final settlement in Central Park. The main house is substantial and elegant in its external appearance; and the halls, apartments and staircases are large and amply lighted. There is a well-built coach-house near the house, which can easily be converted into a picture-gallery of about the same dimensions with the old one. The mansion itself contains a gallery lighted from the roof; and the whole establishment will afford, if necessary, five times as much wall-space as is supplied by the present building in Fifth Avenue.

The Trustees have not hesitated to take a lease for five years of this property, although their interest in the other house will not expire until the 1st of May, 1874. They hope to save a portion of the rent payable on that lease; but even if not successful in this, they do not doubt the propriety of their action in view of the great advantage they have secured by the additional accommodations. Meanwhile, and until their tenancy in the Fifth Avenue building shall be terminated, a portion of their pictures can remain there upon exhibition as heretofore, in the old gallery, which, so far as light is concerned, is all that can be desired; and the new premises will be devoted almost entirely to the loan-exhibition, which the Trustees hope will be by far the most important and interesting that has ever been displayed in this country.

Since the last report there have been added to the gallery, by purchase, two pictures, one of them a group of *two portraits of a gentleman and his wife*, by KAREL DE MOOR, and the other the portrait of a *Lady tuning a guitar*, by the celebrated VAN DER HELST. These works are valuable acquisitions for the gallery, particularly the former, which is a most admirable specimen of the master in color, modeling, and *chiaro-scuro*.

The Trustees have, during the past year, ordered in London a number of reproductions in metal, to be executed by Messrs. Franchi & Son, who are employed for such work by the South Kensington Museum, and who are most skilful and conscientious artists in their line. Mr. George Wallis, the keeper of the art-collections of that Museum, very kindly consented to make a selection for us of such objects as would best suit our purposes, to the amount of about five hundred pounds sterling,

and we hope to receive these reproductions in time to include them in the approaching loan-exhibition. They consist of beakers, bowls, tankards, spoons, forks, knives, ewers, candlesticks, salvers, plateaux, chalices, vases, inkstands, incense-holders, statuettes, and other objects from ancient originals of French, German, Italian, Arabian, Moorish, Spanish and other sources, and are finished with gilt or oxydized silver. Among the most important pieces are two statuettes in bronze, from originals by Giovanni di Bologna, which stand in the holy water basins in the cathedral of Pisa, and represent St. John and the Saviour. Another interesting object, and the most extensive of the series, is the reproduction of a cup and cover with strap-work, masks and foliage in low-relief, and encircled by three bands of enamel, with three panels on the bowl and three on the cover containing scriptural subjects, also in low-relief. The original is of the sixteenth century, and is in the Landhaus at Gratz, in Styria.

The Trustees have the pleasure of acknowledging the receipt of several valuable gifts to the Museum since the date of their last annual report. Among these are an interesting piece of Alaska pottery, from Mr. Vincent Collyer; a group in plaster of Adam and Eve, from J. A. Jerichau, of Rome; two fine portraits of Van der Vinne, from the constant friend and honorary member of the Museum, Mr. Leon Gauchez, of Brussels; a reduced copy of the Apollo Belvedere in marble, from Mrs. Gouverneur M. Wilkins; and a picture called "The Wages of War," one of the best works of Henry Peters Gray, given by an association of gentlemen. Perhaps the most interesting and valuable of all the gifts to the Museum, however, is a bust of Franklin, by Houdon, presented by Mr. John Bard, and announced at the last general meeting of the Corporation. This is a work well worthy of that great realistic sculptor who executed the famous Voltaire, which stands in the foyer of the Théâtre Français, at Paris. It is as remarkable, perhaps, as the Rousseau, and the Washington, which, with the Voltaire, have immortalized this famous artist. The pedigree of the bust of Franklin is irreproachable. It originally belonged to the friend and contemporary of Dr. Franklin, Dr. Samuel Bard, one of the most

distinguished physicians of New York in the time of the Revolution; and it is now presented by his grandson to the Trustees.

The Museum has also been fortunate in being able to exhibit several objects of interest and value, which have been lent to it by its friends. One of the most conspicuous of these was "The Slave Ship," by Turner—a work which was pronounced by the famous critic, John Ruskin, to be among the best of Turner's productions: this masterpiece the President of the Museum kindly placed at our disposal for some time.

By far the most important of all the loans made to us is the one to which allusion has been already made in this report, and one which has caused a change in the habitation of the Museum itself. The Trustees have become the depositaries of a collection of antiquities so rare, so important, and so vastly interesting that they did not hesitate to make considerable sacrifices to display it to their fellow-citizens at the earliest possible moment. It is a curious fact that the most ancient specimens of art in the world should find their home in the most youthful of all museums; and that the only place in which the elegant glass manufactures of the Phœnician artisans executed seven hundred, and perhaps a thousand or twelve hundred, years before Christ, can be satisfactorily studied should be in the city of New York. The *London Times* in speaking of General L. P. di Cesnola's researches, says: "The temple of Golgoi and the tombs of Idalium have yielded him a treasure of statues, vases, objects in gold, bronze, glass, and terra-cotta—in all a vast and valuable collection of 10,000 pieces, itself enough to fill a respectable museum, and a complete and unparalleled illustration of the history of art, religion, and race in the island of Cyprus. Yet the local value and interest of this collection is as nothing to its general and relative significance. For the early history and development of classic art and worship, the migration from shore to shore of the Mediterranean of mythological forms and ideas, their growth on successive soils, the points of contact at which we may detect Assyrian and Asian thought and work strayed from their continents and receiving a new impress from the hand of a new race—for the study of all this, General L. P. di Cesnola's collection affords the amplest materials." "The Lang

Collection " (in the British Museum), the *London Times* adds, "is not worthy to be named in the same year with them, and it is a European misfortune that they should cross the Atlantic."

It is impossible within the limits of this report to give any sufficient idea of the extraordinary interest and value of this collection, which is all the more fascinating from the mystery surrounding it, into which the most profound scholars of Europe have as yet failed to penetrate.

For the possession of these treasures, the nation is indebted, in the first place, to the public spirit of General Cesnola, who preferred that they should be brought to his adopted country at the sacrifice of the larger sum for which he might have disposed of them abroad; and, in the second place, to the prompt generosity of our colleague, the President of the Museum, whom, notwithstanding his own objections to being publicly named in this connection, we desire to mention as the purchaser.

Through his kindness, the Cesnola Collection will shortly be exhibited to the public in our new building, and we cannot doubt that our friends will avail themselves of his offer to allow it to become the permanent property of the Museum upon the repayment of its bare cost, sixty thousand dollars, in instalments to suit the reasonable convenience of the subscribers.

The Trustees, after an interval of more than fourteen months since the opening of their Gallery of Dutch and Flemish paintings, desire to express their satisfaction at the just and intelligent criticisms of the public, and the generous spirit with which this part of their undertaking has been received. Original works of the character of those exhibited are so rare in this country, and there is such a strong temptation among critics to gain a reputation for discrimination by an affectation of extreme fastidiousness, that the Trustees have been both surprised and pleased with the ability and cordiality displayed in the notices of the daily journals. They cannot claim for their gallery an equal rank with those immense European collections which are the fruits of the labors of intelligent experts through a long series of years, aided by the most lavish appropriations of the public money. But they believe, upon the authority of the best professional judges of such objects in central Europe, that their

pictures are authentic and pleasing, and in some cases very rare and admirable specimens of the masters they represent, and that they form a nucleus for a more complete series, well worth the money it has cost, and which it would be difficult if not impossible to replace at anything near the same expenditure.

This opinion has been expressed over and over again by the numerous connoisseurs who have visited the Museum. The same judgment has been substantially and most emphatically pronounced by the foremost review on the continent of Europe, the *Revue des Deux-Mondes*; by the highest authority in France, in matters of art, the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*; by the *Propagateur*, of Lille; by the *Indépendance Belge*; by the *Moniteur Universel*, of Paris; by the *Précurseur*, of Antwerp; by the *Progrès*, of Lyons; and inferentially by Mr. Hamerton, in the *Portfolio*, of London. It has been concurred in, with descriptions more or less ample of the principal pictures, by the reviews, magazines, and weekly and daily press in this and other cities.

The Trustees cannot close this report without expressing their deep and tender regret at the loss by death, within the same week, of two of the most valued officers and Trustees of the Museum—John F. Kensett and George P. Putnam.

Mr. Kensett cordially coöperated with us in our undertaking. An artist himself, and bound up in the success of his own guild, he was most warmly and generously interested in our purchases of ancient works, believing, with his broad and catholic views, that one of the best methods to improve art in the New World is to bring hither all that is excellent and can be reasonably acquired in the Old.

It was through Mr. Putnam's earnest efforts that the meeting was called, at which the plan of the Museum was originated; and during the remainder of his life he gave to it his valuable services, performing much work gratuitously as its Honorary Superintendent, which is usually compensated by a large salary.

The Trustees cherish the most tender recollections of the exalted character and amiable manners of their deceased associates.

All of which is respectfully submitted.